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# CAMDEN HILLS

An Informal History of  
*the Camden-Rockport Region*



*by* Lew Dietz

Pictures *by* Carroll Thayer Berry





EN  
Law Office

Carroll T. Berry





# The Camden Hills







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An Informal History of the  
Camden-Rockport Region

By LEW DIETZ



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARROLL THAYER BERRY

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## One

TUESDAY, 11 of June, we passed up into the river with our ship, about six and twenty miles . . . . . the river itself, as it runneth up into the Maine very nigh forty miles towards the great mountains, beareth in breadth a mile, sometimes three quarters . . . . . and on both sides every half mile very gallant Coves . . . . .”

This from the journal of James Rosier, that sharp-eyed little clerk who, in 1605, shipped with Captain George Waymouth out of Ratcliffe, England on Waymouth’s memorable voyage of exploration to the New World. Making landfall off Cape Cod, Waymouth planned to sail south, but contrary winds carried his ship, *Archangel*, northward. This river was the St. George, the “great mountains,” the Camden Hills.

“ . . . . . Ten of us with our shot, and some armed, with a boy to carry powder and match, marched up . . . . . about four miles in the Maine, and passed over three hills; and because the weather was parching hot, and our men in their armour not able to travel far and return that night to our ship, we resolved not to pass any further, being all very weary . . . . .”

Waymouth's was probably the first voyage to America with a purely scientific motive. His backers were seeking a likely spot for English plantation. Rosier in his *True Relation* pays the region a glowing tribute. And it was, incidentally, the early usage of the term "Maine," meaning mainland, from which the state subsequently derived its name.

Unfortunately, not many of our early explorers were blessed with such conscientious chroniclers as this clerk of Waymouth's. Just who the first white man was who sighted the Camden Hills is a matter of unproductive conjecture. Andre Thevet, a sea-going French priest, sailed the entire Maine coast in 1556 and spent a week in the Penobscot powwowing with some Indians. He saw the Hills and he had this to say:

" . . . . . Having left La Florida (it appears from early maps that all land south of the Kennebec was considered Florida) on the left hand with all its islands, Gulfs and Capes, a river presents itself which is one of the finest rivers in the whole world which we call 'Norumbegue' . . . . . before entering said river, appears an island surrounded by eight very small islets which are near the country of the green mountains . . . . . "

Thevet goes on to say that about three leagues up this "river" he found an island four leagues in circumference and shaped like a man's arm. His river, historians have decided was Penobscot Bay and the "green mountains" our Camden Hills.

It was a few years later that the fabulous Norumbega was explored by the even more fabulous David Ingram. David was a pirate and slave trader to begin with and he returned with accounts of this region that qualify him as an honorary member of any tall story club. What actually he



found in these parts no one will ever know. What he related to his wide-eyed cronies back in England over mugs of ale, bears repeating.

“All the kings in those countries are clothed with painted or colored garments . . . . . and they wear great precious stones which commonly are rubies, being four inches long and two inches broad . . . . . All people in general wear bracelets as big as a man’s finger upon their arms . . . . . where of one commonly is gold and two silver, and many of the women also do wear great plates of gold covering their bodies and many bracelets and chains of great pearls . . . . .”

Warmed by a few more rounds, Ingram’s imagination further expanded. There was gold to be picked up on the street as big as paving blocks! There was a great store of gold and copper in the rocks to be had for the digging, pieces of gold in the river as big as a man’s fist. And the houses! Why the roofs were of glittering gold and silver with magnificent entrances of pure crystal! There were pearls to be had for the sweeping up. He passed over his strange lack of evidence by glibly remarking that after awhile he got tired of picking up pearls and so threw them away.

The Frenchmen De Monts and Champlain got wind of these tall tales and set out, a few years later, to look into it. One of their chroniclers remarked acridly, “if this beautiful town ever existed in nature, I would like to know who pulled it down for there is nothing but houses here made of pickets and covered with bark of trees or with skins.”

And before Waymouth too, came Bartholomew Gosnold out of Falmouth. He was a freebooter and it seems he was looking for “Sassafras root, cedar and Furs.” He did look up from his mercenary quest to find this piece of coast “very pleasant to behold” and to discover to his astonishment, “a pair of Christian trousers on the legs of a savage.”

The next year a friend of Gosnold's, Martin Pring, ventured into Penobscot Bay and some of his company went ashore on Vinalhaven and found a silver fox, giving the name Fox Islands to the group. He noted that beyond the Bay "was a high country full of great woods."

So there were others before Waymouth's historic expedition but these were, for the most part, adventurers. It was Waymouth's voyage that paved the way for the coming tide of colonization. And it was from his hands that the Indian had his first taste of white man's duplicity. Rosier reports that they were all treated with utmost courtesy by the curious aborigines (although their women were kept out of sight.) In return, five Indian braves were lured aboard the *Archangel* with trinkets and carried off to England in chains. The Red man, unapprised of White man's penchant for souvenirs, was inclined to consider this treachery.

Without much doubt it was the voyage of Waymouth to the region of the "great mountains" that convinced Sir Ferdinando Gorges that his future and fortune lay in the New World. It became an obsession that was to dog him to his grave. It had been Gorges and Arundel who had backed Waymouth's expedition and both were pleased and encouraged by his report. Besides being an ambitious and rather avaricious man, Gorges was a fervent royalist and churchman. Unquestionably, his fear and dislike of the French, who were commencing to establish themselves near the St. Lawrence, strengthened his resolve to plant Englishmen on this ragged fringe of Coast.

Although Gorges has been called the Father of Maine Colonization, which doubtlessly he was, his grant and that of his partner, John Mason, didn't include territory further westward along the coast than the Kennebec. After the sorry failure of the first Popham colony there was, for many years,



little heart to face a Maine winter in this land that even the doughty John Smith, after his voyage to this region in 1614, called "a country to affright rather than delight."

And further to discourage the settling of the Penobscot was the fact of the double claim upon it. During these early years the Bay country was a kind of no-man's land between outposts of two unfriendly nations, the English and the French. And to top this uncertainty, the region was being used at the time by the Tarratines and the Wawanocks as a warring ground in their bloody struggle for supremacy.

Although it was to be over a hundred and fifty years before settlers came to the Camden Hills, this region was having its history. In 1629, a great tract of land, extending from the Muscongus to the Penobscot, was granted by the Council of Plymouth to John Beauchamp and Thomas Leverett. All the King (the owner by divine right of all English lands) asked was "one fifth of all such Ore of gold and silver as should be gotten out and obtained in or upon such premises."

Beauchamp promptly died, leaving upon American history the mark of his name on a spit of land in Rockport. Leverett, however, came to Boston, and though he became a man of distinction in this new city, he did nothing further about Camden. It wasn't until 1719 that his grandson, then president of Harvard College, decided to look into the property he had inherited. He looked into it and found that time had confused his title. He found it expedient to divide his claim into ten shares. These Ten Proprietors in turn took Twenty Associates. It is from the Twenty Associates that Camden was spawned.

And it is just about here that General Samuel Waldo struts upon the scene. The Proprietors were having difficulties with a certain David Dunbar who, clothed in Royal authority, and bearing a grandiloquent title of Surveyor

General of the King's Woods, was carrying his arbitrary power so far as to demand tribute for each tree cut in the wilderness. The incensed Proprietors chose Waldo as their agent and dispatched him to England to lay their case before the Crown. The Proprietors, upon Waldo's return, rewarded him (or perhaps found it wise to convey to him) half of their grant . . . . .

This was just the beginning of the confusion. After luring a considerable number of Germans to the region of Muscongus with florid and over-optimistic real estate advertisements, the General died of apoplexy. His death was followed by years of litigation which was finally resolved amicably in 1766 at a meeting between the heirs of the Twenty Associates and the heirs of the departed General.

The Waldo heirs took land to the westward that included Lincolnville and comprising some 400,000 acres. The Twenty Associates took title to the land that was to be Appleton, Hope, Montville, Camden and Rockport.

The region of the Green Mountains was ready for its first settler. He came a year later. His name was James Richards.









## THE NATHAN BROWN HOUSE

Concerning this snug-eaved house on Chestnut Street in Camden village there is considerable controversy. It is believed by some to be the Major Minot house referred to in *Locke's History* as the first frame house built in Camden. Beyond a doubt William Minot from 1771 to 1785 did own the land upon which this present house stands; but there is no conclusive evidence that this is the actual house or that it still exists. One old resident, who was born in this house, claims that it was her father's belief that it was built by a Captain Condon of Matinicus in 1764. There was a Condon concerned in this property for there is a recorded deed showing a conveyance of land (no building is mentioned) from a Benj. Condon to Nathan Brown and Ephraim Barrett in 1789. According to geneological references Benj. Condon came to Camden about 1778 so it is probable, if he was the builder, that this house was constructed about 1780. What we know for a certainty is that Ephraim Barrett lived in this house while his new home was being built across the street in 1806 and that Nathan Brown, who married Suzanna Barrett, lived here for many years until his death. When the house was re-shingled fifty years ago giant sheets of birch bark were found as insulation between the shingles and roof boards. Altho the age of this house cannot be accurately fixed it is probably the oldest, certainly one of the oldest and least altered of the old houses in the region.





## Two

JAMES RICHARDS was a restless young man who, just the year before, had moved his family from Dover, New Hampshire to Bristol, Maine. He came alone that fall of 1767 into the wilderness of what was called Negunticook Harbor to cut ship timber. The green mountains didn't "affright" him, he was charmed by them as well as by the bright stream that tumbled down into the sea. So the next spring he stowed his family aboard a small boat and fetched them hither to settle.

His first crude cabin was built in the shadow of Mount Battie on land confined now by Free and Washington Streets and bounded by Elm and Mechanic. His land went to the river, the rights of which his heirs controlled for a hundred years. (The legend has it that his wife Betty was also charmed by the mountain and gave her name to it. There is evidence however, that this mountain was so designated some years before the arrival of Camden's first settler).

Negunticook was a wild but peaceful spot in those days before the Revolution. There were few Indians in the region

to harass the settlers. The Wawanocks had been decimated by the scourge of small pox and internecine wars had reduced the once fiercesome Tarratines to a few tattered remnants. We learn that there were a few Indian huts on Eaton's and Beauchamp's Points when James Richards came but it appears that these nomadic survivors were peaceably disposed. Our first historian, Mr. Locke, reports that local Redmen were wont to come to the Richards' dooryard to sharpen their knives, a habit that made Betty Richards uneasy for a time. But she got used to it.

And soon she had company, for the next year her husband's brothers, Joseph and Dodipher, arrived and built cabins nearby. The Richards clan proceeded to clear corn land and produce children whose descendants still populate the region.

It was two months after Richards' arrival in Negunticook that Goose River (Rockport) had its first settler. Robert Thorndike had also come alone previously to cut timber. He had, in fact, a number of years before Richards' advent, prepared for his future by purchasing some fifty acres of land from the Twenty Associates. This original tract extended from the Eastern shore of Rockport Harbor eastward to the Lily Pond. He brought his wife and brood of seven from Cape Elizabeth in July and built a rough-timbered house on the small hill overlooking the Harbor (near where the present Methodist Church now stands). Robert Thorndike, thirty-nine years old at this time, brought up twelve children on the "River" before he died at the venerable age of 104.

Robert Thorndike had little more than time to clear a corn patch when he was joined at Goose River by his brother, Paul. Paul was followed by John Harkness, Peter Ott and John Ballard. And out Clam Cove way (Glen Cove) were set-

ting three Williams, Upham, Porterfield, Gregory and a young man named Barak Bucklin.

Over at the Harbor (throughout the early history, the terms "River" and "Harbor" were generally used to designate the two settlements of Camden and Goose River, embraced by the township of Camden) a Major William Minot was building the first frame house of the region on the western side of the inner Harbor and was preparing to construct a grist mill near the falls at the foot of the river. After Minot, came Abraham Ogier of Quebec to take up lot 33 on the plan of the Twenty Associates, a tract of land extending from Ogier's Point westward to the Lily Pond.

Abraham Ogier's permit may be found in the Lincoln Records at the Rockland Court House and seems worthy of inclusion for its reflection of the times.

*Boston, June 28th, 1773*

At a meeting of the standing committee of the Proprietors, called the Twenty Associates of the Lincolnshire Company, voted — Whereas, Mr. Abraham Ogier had encouragement, some time past, to come from Quebec and settle upon a front lot in Camden, which he now applies for, but all those lots being taken up and settled, it is therefor voted, that the said Ogier be permitted to settle upon lot 33, of Beauchamp Neck, upon the following conditions, viz: Said Ogier shall perform and do all the duties which other settlers in said town are obliged to do and perform, as mentioned and expressed in the printed conditions of settlement for settling the Town; and, in addition thereto, he shall work two days extraordinary in each year, on the roads and



ministerial lot in said Town, so long as settlers by Articles are obliged to work thereon.

A true copy ——— attest:

Nath'l Appleton, *Pro's Clerk*

This is to certify that said Abraham Ogier hath performed all the aforesaid conditions, as witness our hands.

Robert Thorndike  
Sam'l McLaughlin  
John Groos  
James Minot

This was the Plantation of Camden just prior to the American Revolution; a dozen or so crude, lonely houses of unskun logs, scattered along the shore from Clam Cove to Negunticook, connected by a few axe-blazed trails. Small patches had been cleared for corn but the settlers depended more on their flintlocks to fill their larders and game was plentiful. James Richards, they tell us, accounted for at least seventy moose and thirty bears, one of the latter whose fore-paw "filled a peck measure." It was a loose, uncohesive settlement, slashed out of the encroaching wilderness. A British landing party, a few years later, called it a collection of pig sties.

The British, perhaps, didn't under-rate the habitations but they were soon to learn that they had underestimated the men who lived in them.









## THE WILLIAM GREGORY HOUSE

*One of the oldest houses in the region, this home of Captain William Gregory stands up the old County Road in Glen Cove. His first house built near this site, a crude affair of logs, billeted the Officers of the Pine Hill Battery during the Revolution. The present house was built in 1781. William Gregory, one of Camden's first settlers, was chosen Moderator at the first town meeting. It was here in this house many years later that William Gregory's grandson, Hanson Crockett Gregory, invented the hole in the doughnut. There are many colorful and romantic versions of this momentous discovery. The one held by his current decendants is simply that Hanson as a young boy came home to find his mother making fry cakes. He sampled one and finding the center doughy suggested that she cut the centers out. This his indulgent mother did, little knowing, at that moment, she was concocting a delicacy that was to become as American as pumpkin pie. In recent years this old house underwent considerable alterations but the clean simple lines of the original house can still be distinguished.*



## Three

THE focus of the Revolution was many miles away from this wild stretch of Maine coast but the Plantation of Camden was soon involved in the struggle for American Independence. Although the settlers, being isolated, had as yet no strong feeling of nationalism, the harassments of the British soon convinced them that they had a personal fight on their hands. Camden had its collaborationists who were all too eager to give aid and comfort to the enemy but the settlers, for the most part, became fervently loyal to the new cause.

Robert Jameson, just getting settled on his new land on the Point now bearing his name, was mowing his field that first war summer when a British barge (or "shaving mill," as they soon were to be dubbed) approached and nineteen men, led by a Tory named Pomeroy, came ashore. This Jameson, it seems, having been outspoken in his espousal of the rebel cause, was a marked man. He was forcibly detained, his home sacked and his livestock slaughtered.

According to our early historian, Jameson was a violent and powerful man with a long memory. He met up with



Pomeroy after the war and settled the account with a blow that all but finished this Early American Quisling. And it was this same Jameson who came upon another traitor at Peter Ott's Tavern and picking him up like a length of cordwood, tossed him into the roaring fireplace.

Now a word concerning Leonard Metcalf. He was a bosom companion of James Richards (later he made himself fabulous, when on a hunting excursion with Richards, he rode a bear down Mount Battie) and he came to Camden the same year as this first settler. His cabin stood near the shore on Metcalf Point (Dillingham's Point). This redoubtable Leonard Metcalf appears to have been of a heroic mold, the sort of man that wars are made for. The most memorable incident in Leonard's personal war with the British occurred at an enemy landing on the west shore of the Harbor near his cabin. Metcalf and a friend named Andrew Wells spied a British schooner making into the cove. Metcalf went for his musket and sent Wells for a drum. Thus equipped, the resourceful duet proceeded to imitate a defending regiment, Wells beating his drum and Leonard drilling imaginary troops at the top of his lungs.

These tactics, however, served merely to delay the landing. The invaders landed three barges on the west shore of the inner Harbor. In a solo delaying action, the story goes, Metcalf stumbled backward over a log and one of the landing party spied him and shouted: "There's one of the damyankees dead!" With that Metcalf arose, roaring: "That's a dam lie!" He let them have another ball before joining a band of his fellows on the way to warn Goose River.

It was in this foray that Major Minot's saw mill was burned and grist mill touched off. James Richards' first home was also destroyed by the marauders.

But Leonard Metcalf was to engage the enemy again shortly after this incident and with considerably more success. An American Coaster, hotly pursued by a British barge, went ashore near Ogier's Cove. Metcalf rallied a few neighbors and, together with the crew of the luckless Coaster, they drove the barge off. Metcalf, it is reported, kept running out from the cover of the thicket for better shooting.

And it is not surprising to find that Leonard Metcalf was one of the band of local patriots drafted from the region to embark on Commodore Saltonstall's expedition to dislodge the British at Castine. With him from the village on this ill-starred campaign were William Gregory, Peter Ott and Andrew Wells. The expedition turned out disastrously due, history tells us, to chicken-hearted Saltonstall's failure to exploit his initial advantage and reinforce his valiant landing party who had scaled the heights at a cost of a hundred dead. The proud little flotilla was burned or scuttled and one remnant of this ragtag bobtail army retreated home through Belfast and Camden.

With Castine firmly in the hands of the British there were dark days ahead for the Penobscot settlers. To increase the rising tension, the loyal citizens of Belfast were abandoning their homes rather than take the oath of allegiance to the Crown and were trekking to Camden or on to the westward. There was very little with which to oppose a landing in force. The barracks at Clam Cove, under the command of General Ulmer of Ducktrap and the small force at Camden commanded by Benjamin Benton, didn't total more than three hundred men. The only artillery at the settlement's disposal was one 18 pounder mounted on Pine Hill overlooking Clam Cove.

It was during these uneasy day that Robert Thorndike, Goose River's first citizen, figured in an exciting adventure. Captain Samuel Tucker of Marblehead, commanding an



American privateer, had captured a British merchantman off Blue Hill. Tucker was shaping his course down the Bay, hotly pursued by the infamous Captain Mowett of His Royal Navy when he came across Thorndike fishing off the Ledges. Captain Tucker impressed Thorndike, rather arbitrarily, it seemed to the Goose River settler, forcing him to pilot his vessel out of the Bay. The chase narrowing, Tucker slipped into a shallow cove near Harpswell. Mowett, unacquainted with those waters and realizing the advantage was his, waited outside. By this time, it appears, our Robert Thorndike had forgiven the indignity and knowing the waters (he had come from Cape Elizabeth), he offered to take Tucker out under cover of darkness. This he did three nights later in a stiff no'easter. The Yankee Tucker, and his fat prize, slipped past Mowett and out to sea and eventually arrived safely at Salem Harbor.

It is just about here that Lt. John Harkness steps into our local history. John, a wounded veteran of early Revolutionary campaigns, had come to Goose River in 1779 at the age of 29 and built himself a small cabin on the west shore of the harbor near the creek. He returned one day from the forest to find his hut ransacked and his precious musket gone. Across the harbor, he spied a band of British raiders guarding their booty-laden barge. All John Harkness wanted was his musket and he knew only one way of retrieving it. He circled the cove, stepped out upon the raiders and snatched up his gun. Pointing it at the heads of the startled marauders, he coolly backed away and slipped into the forest.

This was the beginning of what may well be termed Goose River's first love story. Perhaps at this time John was already courting Elizabeth, the young daughter of Peter Ott, the Inn keeper. Perhaps, being a solitary man, he had not yet joined the social life of the settlement. What we do know



is that about this time, Peter Ott's Tavern was also visited by British raiders. The uninvited guests went directly to the cellar and knocked the bung out of a rum keg. Elizabeth rushed to the scene shouting, "Stop, you villians!" and, holding her fist over the flowing bung, put up such a spirited defense of her father's property that the invaders were forced to retire in confusion.

Brave men are seldom brave where their hearts are involved. It seems probable it was Elizabeth who set her cap for John; but all we know, incontrovertably, is that soon after this they were married. In 1782, John Harkness for 30 pounds purchased 82 acres on the west side of Goose River bridge from William Simonton. He built a frame house somewhere near the corner of Beech and Camden Streets and produced six children, John, Mary, William, Robert, Thomas and Elizabeth, before his untimely death from cancer in 1806. He now lies in the Amsbury Hill cemetery.

News of the great victory came to the Plantation of Camden in the fall of 1782. It is clear, accepting Locke's account, that this great day was celebrated with true pioneer lustiness. A carnival spirit prevailed and the jubilant revelers foregathered at the home of Robert Thorndike to make merry.

Locke in his history, though approving of the motive that fired this high celebration, took pains to apologize for his antecedents' unrestraint.

Remarked Locke reprovingly, ". . . . The actions of men are to be judged by the light of the influence with which they were surrounded and hence no further apologies are here required for the way our patriot settlers gave vent to the ebullition of their feelings at the success of their country's cause. A hogshead was tapped . . . . After partaking of a feast of bread, cheese and fish, the company then passed

around the 'occaba' and drank to the health of the prominent actors in the struggle . . . . . And they marched around the hogshead, drinking of its contents, and growing more merry under its influence, the toasts were multiplied . . . . . The festivities were kept up until morning when dawn of day admonished them it was time to bring them to a close . . . . . ”





1892  
The Declaration of Duck Trap & County of Hancock

## FIRST MAP OF CAMDEN

*This first map of the Town of Camden is a reproduction of the true copy discovered in recent years among the old town records. It is now a possession of the Camden Historical Society. The original, executed four years after the formation of the Township (probably by John Harkness) is in the Archives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The southern bound Thomastown, is, of course, Rockland and the westerly bound, Barrettstown, Hope. The Plantations of New Canaan and Ducktrap later became Lincolnville.*

Barrelytown Plantation - N. 7. N. 55 Degrees east 5 miles and 80 rods

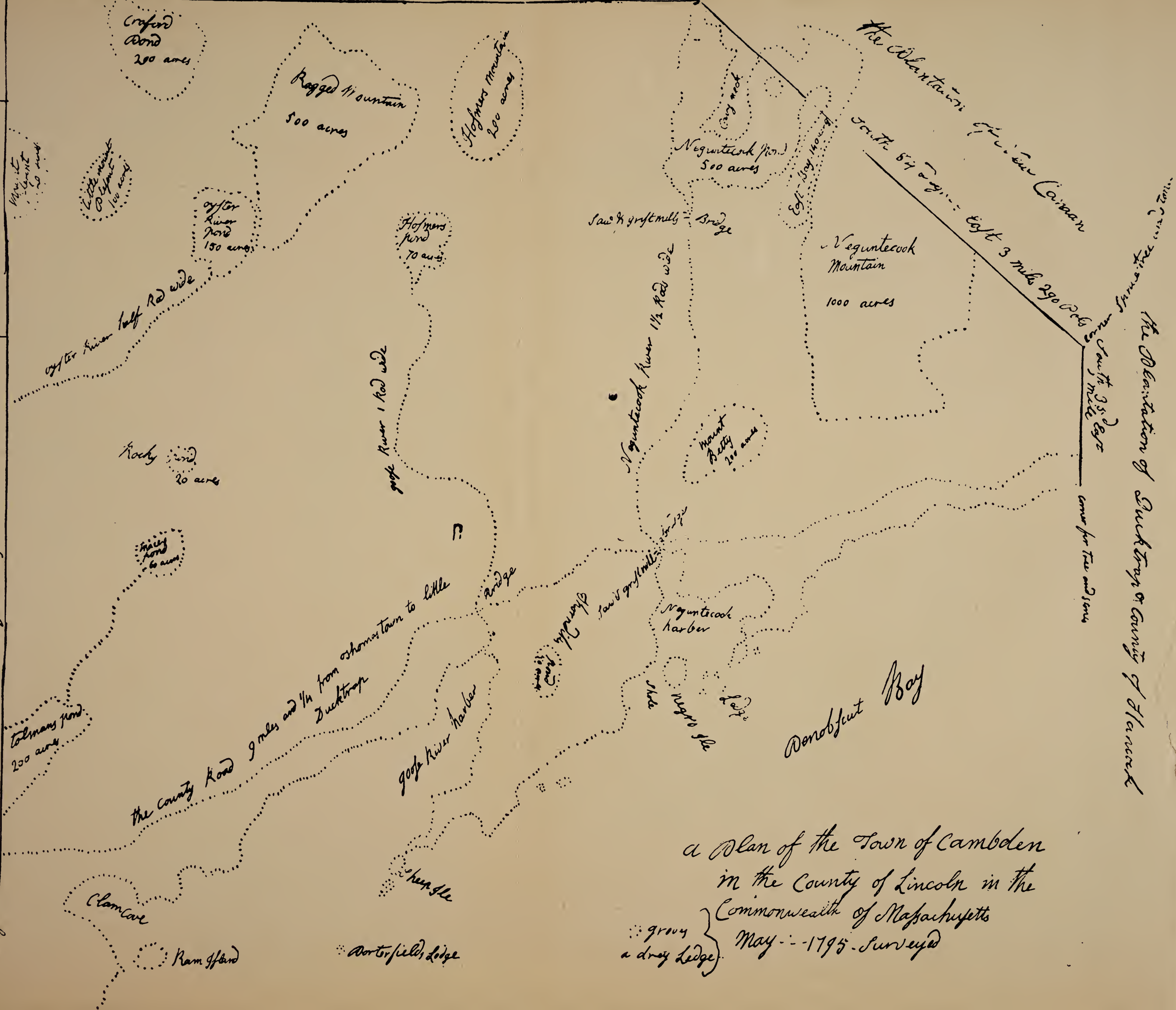
on Union  
2500 rods

on Warren  
1 mile and 243 rods

total 7-268

Adjoining on Thomastown five miles 95 rods

by the Magnetic needle North 35 Degrees west -



a Plan of the Town of Camden  
in the County of Lincoln in the  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
May - - 1795 - Surveyed



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## *Four*

IN the year 1791, the region was known as the Plantation of Cambden. This region of roughly seventy-five square miles, extending from Clam Cove to Little Ducktrap along the coast, bounded by Thomaston, Warren and Union on the west, Barrettstown Plantation (Hope) on the north and New Canaan (Lincolnvile) and Ducktrap Plantations to the east. Here, in this year, lived 331 settlers.

There was at this time but one road that could be dignified by the term thoroughfare. This was the County Road, later to be termed the Post Road. It serpentineed from Thomaston through Clam Cove, Goose River and the Negunticook settlements, holding them together by a thin, tenuous thread. The crossing at the "River" was a crude, wooden affair and the bridge over the Negunticook (at the spot where the Knox Mill now stands) was little more than a log jam. The secondary "roads," connecting the outlying settlers with one another and their main artery, were mere trails indicated by spotted trees.



In addition to those who had taken up land along the shore, a yeoman breed was moving in. Isaiah Tolman, coming right after the vanguard had taken up 500 acres at Tolman Pond (Lake Chicawaukie). Charles Barrett, an agent of the Twenty Associates, was offering bright inducements in the way of grants to those who would clear the land back country. James Simonton had come (the original deed dated 1790 shows he paid Charles Barrett five shillings for a 100 acre tract) and at his heels John and Samuel Annis, Benjamin Barrows, Daniel Andrews, Waterman Thomas. To the foothills of the mountains back of Cambden Village had settled the Philbrooks, Hosmers, Mansfields, Hodgmans, Russells. Among the other names that appear in the first pages out of our towns' early history are the Wadsworths, Alexanders, Wilsons, Conklins, Davis', Tibbetts, Nutts, Samuel Jacobs, Thomas Spring, Samuel McLaughlin, Elisha Gibbs, John Gordon, Zackariah Hardy, Waterman Hewett, Jacob Vaning, Isaac Harrington, Hezekiah Prince, Daniel Chaney.

To the north, along the Belfast Road, William and Joseph Eaton were purchasing tracts of the land (this was the land of the Waldo heir, General Knox). Joshua and Lemuel Dillingham were clearing lands, laying the groundwork for their bright future in the new settlement.

It was these men, and many unsung who, held together by common needs and aspirations, decided they were ready for self government. They asked for a charter and got one. In the spring of 1791, the Plantation of Cambden emerged as a township.

The name Cambden (or Camden as the name soon evolves) had been used to designate this region as early as 1768 in the plan of the Twenty Associates. The new freeholders were not moved to change it for Lord Cambden had been an ardent friend of the Colonists, prior to the Revolution.

The first town meeting was called in April and, either because Goose River seemed to be the center of population at the time, or for the practical reason that there was no other likely place to meet, the citizens gathered at the Tavern of Peter Ott.

This memorable meeting was brief, informal and doubtlessly without benefit of parliamentary procedure. Affable William Gregory was made Moderator and bookish John Harkness was named Town Clerk. John Harkness was elected First Selectman, William Gregory, Second and William McClathry, Third. Other officers filled at this solemn assembly were Paul Thorndike, Constable; Nathaniel Palmer, Tax Collector (this job went to the lowest bidder); Joseph Eaton, Treasurer. The most important office of Surveyors of the Highways was filled by William Gregory, Ephriam Gay, John Harkness, Joseph Eaton, Joshua Dillingham, Nathaniel Hosmer and Thomas Harrup. The Fence Viewers, Abraham Jones and Joseph Eaton. The Surveyors of Lumber and Cullers of Staves, James Richards, David Nutt, David Blodgett. The Tythingmen, David Blodgett, Joseph Eaton, Barak Bucklin, Thomas Mace. Sealers of Leather, David Nutt, Hogreeves, Peter Ott, Nathaniel Palmer. Sealer of Weights and Measures, John Harkness.

There were about thirty-two freeholders qualified to vote at this first meeting. The qualifications were quite specifically mentioned in the posted warning. This privilege was limited to those male citizens . . . . . "being 21 years of age, a resident in said town for the space of a year and providing having freehold estate within said town of the annual income of three pounds or having any estate to the value of sixty pounds."

The main concern of this first meeting and most of the subsequent meetings during this decade was the matter of roads. Another equally vexing problem was the vagrant live-



stock. At the first gathering, it was voted to pay Robert Thorndike three pounds "to build a pound on Peter Ott's land and Peter Ott to be Pound Keeper." The said pound was to be "Seven feet high and tight enough to stop pigs a month old, a door with iron hinges, a lock and kee."

And there was a bridge controversy, the first of a long succession. In the second year of the new township, William McClathry, a shrewd man with an eye for an easy dollar, talked the town into voting 150 pounds for a new bridge over the Negunticook and giving him the contract to build it. The freeholders apparently thought this over later and decided they'd been taken in. Another meeting was called and this time the appropriation was reduced to 12 pounds, 12 shillings. Moreover, it was specified that this bridge should be of planks three inches thick and sixteen feet long and two teams across. (The McClathry house built in 1792 on site of Camden's Methodist Church and moved to Sea Street at the time of the Church construction, is considered by many the oldest house in Camden.)

After the first few years, it was decided that future town meetings should alternate between the "River" and the "Harbor." On the posted warrant for the meeting July 10, 1793, Peter Ott's Tavern was crossed off and John Bower's Tavern substituted. Up to the turn of the century, and a few years beyond, we see mentioned as hosts of this meeting, Ebenezer Paine, Philip Crooks, Edward Payson, Benjamin Palmers, Benjamin Carleton, Holbrook Martin, Isaac Dow, Elisha Hobbs, Benjamin Cushing and John Eager.

Camden's first church was a little slow in organizing, too slow, it appears, for the Commonwealth authorities. In 1794 the town was indicted under a current law for failing to support a minister of the gospel and a fine of two pounds, fourteen shillings and six pence was levied. It wasn't until



the following year that the settlement began receiving spiritual sustenance from itinerant preachers.

We learn from the faded first volume of the town records that it was the Free-Will Baptists of West Camden (West Rockport) who were first moved, in 1798, to form a church but it was to be some seventeen years before they were in financial position to erect a meeting house. The first Camden meeting house was built in 1799 on the Post Road near the site of the junction of Park and Elm Streets. Pews were sold at public auction and the individual subscriptions ranged from fifteen to three hundred and fifty dollars.

Pews so bought became a very tangible property, judging from the legal papers involved in transferring this church right. Here is a section of one document filed in the town records:

“ . . . . . that I, Daniel Mansfield, of Camden in the County of Lincoln and State of Maine, Yeoman, in consideration of fifteen dollars paid by Jonathan Thayer of Camden . . . . . do hereby acknowledge, give grant, sell and convey unto said Jonathan Thayer, his heirs and assigns forever, one undivided half of one undivided seventy-fifth part of one acre of land on which the meeting house in said Camden stands together with one undivided half of a pew on the lower floor thereof, numbering eighteen . . . . . ”

The first Post Office was established on Eaton's Point (just south of Atlantic Avenue on Sea Street.) Joseph Eaton was appointed first Postmaster.

Camden's first shipyard (1791) was run by William McClathry and his first vessel, a sloop of 26 Tons, *Industry*. Camden's first Harbor Master, as well as first school master, was Asa Hosmer.

This initial schoolhouse stood somewhere near the corner of Wood and Elm Street. (The original building was subse-

quently moved around the bend of Union Place and is now a part of the frame house that stands there). There is evidence that Goose River's first schoolhouse stood on Russell Avenue, just across from the town office.

From the early records we note that Camden, from the very beginning, had its wards. The town's first charge was one, Mehitabel Bayley, for, at the town's second meeting, the citizens voted ten shillings a month to "support Jos. Bayley's daughter that lives at Mr. John Thompson's.

John Hathaway, Camden's first lawyer, was a charming and talented young man. He came to town and married an equally charming young woman, Deborah Cushing. He built a fine house on lower Chestnut Street (Hathaway-Cushing house, 1798) and began a practice of law. Camden's first lawyer died tragically a year later of typhus, leaving a stricken wife and a young son.

And inevitably there were marriages in this first decade of the new Township. The first intentions of marriage filed in the yellowing records were those of Daniel Andrews and Olive Gregory in 1790. And just as inevitably there was plighted love that went awry, or so it would appear from the intentions filed in September, 1792 by James Laurence and Sally Simonton and the marriage recorded three months later of our James Laurence and Lila Simonton.

This was the Township of Camden as the new century approached. It was called a Township and down at the "Harbor," at least, it seemed to have assumed the appearance of a town. We quote a transcript from the journal of Reverend Paul Coffin, one of our early circuit riders, that appears in Locke's History of Early Camden.

"Squire McClathry," Coffin wrote, "treated me with true and simple politeness and hospitality. It is a place beautiful for situation and promising for trade. The Harbor has a

mill for boards and corn, on a fresh stream, and the adjacent, gently rising lands make good appearance, and are quite convenient. The back country, east and west, have no market but this. One ship and one schooner have this year been launched here and six or seven heavy vessels on the stocks. The streets are beaten and worn. The place looks more like home and a seat of trade than Ducktrap, Northport or Belfast . . . . . about fifteen neat houses, some large with other buildings, make appearance of a compact town . . . . . ”





## PETER OTT'S TAVERN

*It was here that Camden's first town meeting was held in 1791. Peter Ott, German born, was the region's first Inn Keeper as well as the town's first Keeper of the Pound. This venerable house, just south of Rockport Village on the Rockland road, was the scene of a number of British raids during the Revolution and it was here that John Harkness courted the Inn Keeper's Daughter, Elizabeth. Peter's son, born Peter, Jr., fancied the English spelling of the name. Dying within a year of one another, father and son are buried side by side at the Mountain Street Cemetery under a headstone marked OTT-OAT. This house has undergone some changes since it was built (probably about 1780) including an ell; but examination of the cellar and roof suggest that the general shape of the main house has been little altered.*







## *Five*

AT the spring Town Meeting in the year 1808, the citizens of Camden voted "to raise \$100 for the purpose of purchasing powder and ball." This was a straw in the wind, an ill wind bearing the acrid scent of war.

In the decade following the century's turn a fresh wave of settlers had doubled the population. In 1810 the Township contained 1600 people. Joseph Sherman had cleared lands along the Belfast Road and had become one of the region's most prosperous farmers. Benjamin and Joseph Cushing were already business men of considerable importance. Micah and William Hobbs, newly come from Massachusetts, were identified with numerous enterprises, including a "modern" water system.

There was Belcher Sylvester who had come to town with a keg of rum and a bolt of India cotton to open a store. Ephraim Wood had built a mill on Megunticook (this spelling was now generally accepted) stream. Captain Noah Brooks was building ships at his new Yard. A William Carleton was

establishing a prosperous trade at his store on the site of the present Camden Bank. Robert Chase, later a perennial first selectman, was the village blacksmith. (His home is now the shop of Bucklin, the Tailor).

Simeon Hunt was another young businessman in those early years of the century. His harness establishment stood on what is now the village Common. He married in 1810 and built his home on Elm Street. (Now owned by Captain Swift). Long after his death, the old harness shop was moved, landing, curiously enough, right beside his old homestead where it stands today as a two family residence.

Samuel Jacobs, whose hundred acres of land extended at one time from the quarries to the Harbor, had built a stately home on what is now Limerock and Chestnut Streets in 1800. (He had bought the farm from McClathry in 1793 for 86 pounds, 2 shillings). He was a shipwright by trade but he had his finger in most of the leading enterprises of the village. Squire Jacobs was the town's first representative to the General Court.

Another shipwright was John Eels. He had recently married Lucy, the young daughter of Paul and Bathsheba Thorndike. His home (1800) stands on lower Chestnut Street. Together Lucy and John were to produce a famous shipbuilding family.

Here also, in the growing settlement on the Harbor, just before the "Sailor's War" with England, were Calvin Curtis, the carpenter; Erastus Foote, lawyer; Edward Hanford, hatter; Nathaniel Martin, merchant; Joseph Huse, doctor; the brothers, Frye and Joseph Hall, Moses and Joshua Trussell. These were, for the most part, young men and each in his way was to play a role in the early development of the town.

It was during this expanding decade that Daniel Barrett, a pious man, full of great and imaginative schemes, engineered

his astonishing Turnpike. Daniel had recently purchased Beauchamp Point from William Molyneaux (in 1793 for 90 pounds to be paid for in clearing lands) and built his farmhouse south of the Lily Pond. The Turnpike, a mile long toll road, was cut out of the foot of the cliffs along Lake Megunticook at the cost of \$6,000. The toll rates were scaled upward from one cent each for swine and sheep to eighteen cents for a horse and chaise. The backers, however, never got their money out of it and the Turnpike was abandoned some years later.

It was in this decade (1805) that Camden called its first settled minister at a salary of \$500 and a third of a lot on Goose River and at whose ordination ceremonies one, John Norton, of Lincolnville "Made an unnatural fool of himself by imbibing to excess and while endeavoring to accomplish the feat of a glutton, swallowed a piece of unmasticated meat and choked to death."

This was the Township that in June of 1812, received word that Congress had declared a state of war to exist between Great Britain and these United States. On the second day of July, following the procedure of the Revolution, a Committee of Public Safety was appointed. The town warned "Every citizen forthwith to arm and equip himself . . . . for defense of the town."

The first general muster was called by William Carleton and the companies assembled at the Inn of John Eager (which stood on the site of the town common). Troops were drilled and vacancies filled. Those too young tagged along, the Revolutionary veterans, too old for active service, were formed into a volunteer company led by one of the Committee of Public Safety, John Pendleton.

The coastal citizens, who had bitterly resented the American embargo acts that were blighting their trade, now were ready to fight a war for commercial survival. The temper



of the times was stated with eloquence by Paul Thorndike, Jr., the son of Goose River's second citizen, when a privateer on which he had sailed was captured by the British in the English Channel. When questioned by his captors concerning Yankee military dispositions, he is said to have replied, "Why, sir, every stump is a place of defense and every pile of rocks is a fortification and you might as well think of subduing Satan in tophet as try and subdue the Yankees by fighting them."

This was a fair estimate of the job the British had on their hands in the waters of the Penobscot. In those days the coast villages depended on the sea, not only for their livelihood, but their very subsistence. During the period of the hostilities, the Maine coast was infested with enemy craft. To survive, the town had to stay in sea trade against all hazards. The Maine coast became the scene of hit and run warfare with British privateers preying on American merchantmen and American privateers intercepting the British merchantmen.

In this kind of warfare, the Yankees had a slight advantage for they knew the waters and their ships, though smaller, were usually faster and more ably handled. A good percentage of the towns became engaged either in blockade running or privateering.

In 1814, when the British once again occupied Castine, the war came close to the "Harbor" and the "River." An enemy force had sailed up the St. George (the scene of Waymouth's memorable voyage) and had burned the fort near Broad Cove. An attack on Camden was expected momentarily. Colonel Erastus Foote (who later moved to Wiscasset and became Attorney General of Maine) called up his regiment to defend the town. Hastily, fortifications were thrown up on Eaton's Point and across the inner harbor at Jacob's Point. The spiked guns from the St. George fort were lugged over

by ox teams and mounted. Two 12 pounders procured from Boston were dragged up Mount Battie. Barracks were established at the Harbor and picket stations were set up at Ogier's Hill and at Clam Cove. The September morning a British fleet appeared in the Bay, the whole town was at battle stations.

But Camden's perilous day of trial was postponed. The British sailed up the Bay.

It was soon after this tense day that Asa Richards and Peter Oat, the son of the Goose River's innkeeper, Peter Ott, had their exciting adventure. Fishing off-shore they were captured by a British cutter. Released the following day, they returned home with the alarming intelligence that Northport was about to be raided.

A force was quickly organized and dispatched from Camden. They arrived too late to thwart the landing for the British were already roving over the neighborhood committing assorted unfriendly acts, the least of which was using insulting language to a Mrs. Crowell and ripping open feather beds and casting the feathers to the winds. The Camden troops promptly ended these depredations and drove the Invaders back to their barge.

It was this same year that the British privateer *Thinks I To Myself* landed troops at Clam Cove only to be turned back by a handful of embattled farmers. It was during this fall that a party of Camden men were captured off-shore and carried off to Castine on a trumped up charge of espionage. The men, Robert Chase, Simon Hunt, Alden Bass and Perley Pike, were released a few days later after negotiations.

It was this year (November) that Camden had its narrowest squeak in this rough and tumble sea war. Noah Miller one of the region's patriot pirates, with his reach boat and an armed crew had succeeded in capturing a British merchant-



man off Turtle Head. This rich prize he took to Northport and subsequently, with Major Philip Ulmer, the Ducktrap Deputy Inspector of Customs, at the helm, the prize sailed into Camden where it was promptly declared confiscated.

Fearing quick reprisals the selectmen ordered the cargo unloaded and transported to Portland and the vessel taken to St. George and secreted. The trouble they expected came promptly. The lookout on Mount Battie, a few days later, sighted a large and heavily armed British Man of War making into the Harbor. The village expected the worst and the town began evacuating women and children.

About one p. m. the *Furieuse*, her deck pierced for thirty eight frowning guns, hove to off the Ledges. A barge put off from Camden and at the meeting off Negro Island, the town officials heard the grim demands. If the prize, or, in lieu of that, \$80,000, was not delivered within a designated time, both Camden and Lincolnville would be burned to the ground.

A special town meeting was hastily convoked. The ensuing discussions were academic. The town no longer had the cargo and they certainly didn't have \$80,000. So negotiations were resumed with Robert Chase and Erastus Foote pleading the town's case before a rather unfriendly court. In the meantime, all the available manpower was mustered out from the surrounding towns. According to one witness, the troops marching in platoons extended from the center of the town one half mile along the Post Road to the meeting house.

Excitement ran high those next several days. There was little sleep for the remaining inhabitants of the village. Then, abruptly, the British frigate set her sails and departed taking with them two hostages, Benjamin Cushing and Robert Chase. Whether this retreat was prompted by kindness or prudence isn't clear but the freeholders accepted their salvation prayer-



fully. The hostages after spending some days at Castine were released and returned to their homes.

Two months later the news of peace was carried to the village at midnight by a driver of a stage coach. The town was aroused this cold February night by the wild clatter of hooves on the icy road and the hooting of the stage horn. At dawn the next morning a roaring crowd scaled Mount Battie, led by Simeon Tyler, and the guardian cannon on the summit signalled victory to the countryside.





## THE WILSON FARM

*This isolated farm in the shadow of Ragged Mountain at Oyster River Pond (Mirror Lake) was probably built during, or shortly after, the American Revolution. According to an old resident whose maternal grandmother was a Wilson this house was standing in 1783 for it was here his grandmother, who died seventy-two years ago at the age of ninety-two, was born. A local legend has it that there is a cave on the hill just to the westward that was kept provisioned in the early days as a retreat in the event of Indian attack. Many of the early Wilsons lie buried in the West Rockport cemetery.*







*The Smiling Cow*  
*Camden, Maine*

## Six

IT was quite a day in the village when the 125 ton steamboat *Maine* prowed into the Harbor to inaugurate Camden's first regular boat service. The *Maine* was to connect at Bath for the steamboat *Patent* that plied between Bath and Boston. The fare was \$2.00.

A crowd from all the surrounding villages assembled and a cannon was touched off to celebrate this momentous event. This was the fall of 1823. Some who gathered at the wharf were eager to congratulate the proud skipper, Captain Daniel Lunt of Lincolnville. There were others who stood back and shook their heads. Such progress was a mixed blessing. The noisy, dirty, wood-burning machine was most certain to frighten every self-respecting fish out of the Bay.

But the steamboat had come to stay and it was a milestone in the progress of Camden town. The coast's recovery from its prostration after the close of the Sailor's War was slow. To add to the misery of post-war years, the region suffered a series of bad crops. In the wake of the war had come

a moral depression as well. An uneasiness concerning this low moral level was expressed in an article in the Town Warrant in 1817. " . . . . . to see what measures the town will adopt for the purpose of preventing retailers within the town of Camden selling spiritous liquors to be drunk, or entertaining or suffering a person or persons to drink same within their shops."

We learn from our early historian that there were seventeen stores in Camden village and of these seventeen, sixteen of them sold ardent spirits over the counters as freely as a bag of salt. This rugged abstainer might well have been Mr. Oakes Perry whose store sat on the site of the present Carleton, French establishment. (Oakes Perry's house, 1821, on Union Place, is now owned by Dr. Herbert Miller.) Mr. Perry was at this time one of the prime movers in the new temperance movement. He was one of the group who, a few years later, formed the Camden Temperance Society, the members of which resolved: " . . . . . not to drink spiritous liquors unless they deemed it necessary."

It was just a few years before the coming of the first steamboat that Camden suffered its first major ordeal by fire. A night blaze destroyed four business establishments at the foot of Megunticook stream; the saw mill and grist mill owned by Joseph Eaton and John Pendleton, the bark mill owned by Moses Parker and the blacksmith shop of Robert Chase.

Now the dark days were behind Camden for a spell. Industry was reaching a new peak of prosperity. The town meetings were held during this period at the newly constructed Mason's Hall which stood, until the great fire of 1892 on the site of the present Hall. In 1824, the town found it necessary to raise a total of \$5450; \$3,000 for roads, \$800 for schools, \$150 for a bridge and \$1500 for all additional expenses.



Shipbuilding was already becoming a large factor in Camden's prosperity. Joseph Stetson, known as the Deacon, had taken over the Noah Brooks Yard and he was to build, in the course of the ensuing thirty years, more than seventy vessels on Camden's shore (the Deacon, the story goes, switched the men's ration from rum to coffee). Benjamin Cushing was also building ships and it was one of his schooners, the *Camden*, that was, in 1821, captured by pirates off the Isle of Pines.

Over Goose River way things were quiet. This western section of the township was a region of farms, its concerns and pleasures, rural. Goose River's only industry in the 1820's was the salt works of General Estabrook at Hog Cove on Beauchamp Point. Large vats were set out on the shore and water pumped into them at high water. This was boiled down between tides taking about 400 gallons of water to make a bushel of salt. The going price of salt was one dollar a bushel which apparently wasn't profitable for the General's venture was soon abandoned.

In and about the Village of Goose River stood about eighteen dwellings in 1825. The elder Thorndike had replaced his first rude house with a more substantial one. Two of his sons, William and Eben, had built homes of their own on the Post Road (Camden Street). Just north of William Thorndike's home stood William Carleton's fine residence. Samuel McLaughlin, who owned land on both sides of Goose River (he had bought 110 acres from Ebenezer Thorndike in 1785 for 120 pounds) lived in a small snug house on Maine Street.

The estimable Daniel Barrett was bringing up a large family on his farm back of the Lily Pond. A David Rollins farmhouse stood on the site of the present Megunticook Golf Club. Also, hard by the Lily Pond, were the small close-eaved houses of Abram Richards and John Reed.

John Harkness had died in 1806, his children inheriting considerable tracts of land on the west side of Goose River bridge. There is a cellar hole marking the site of the John Harkness farmhouse on Camden Street near Beech. And just below the West Street intersection of Camden Street is another over-grown cellar, the site of the home of his son, Robert.

To the north at Simonton's Corner, the Simontons were producing Simontons and the Annis' were bringing up Annis'. Job Ingraham had come recently to the corners (soon to be known as Ingraham Corners — now called West Rockport). On Beech Hill were the Nutts and the Shibbles. On out along the County Road at Clam Cove were Youngs, Jamesons, Bucklins and Gregorys. Out around Oyster River Pond (Mirror Lake) was a small tribe of Wilsons leading a lonely isolated existence in the long shadows of Ragged Mountain.

This was the Township of Camden in the third decade of the new century a few years after Maine had broken away from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to become the twenty-third state of the Union. The talk at Goose River was concerned with crops, of weather, and the cost of feed. There were husking bees and house raisings. And some fine evenings the young and the old would gather, they say, at the Nutt farmhouse. The old to set and beat time and the young to dance to a song that went like this:

Hello Nancy Nutt  
Hello Ben Paul  
If you don't come now  
You needn't come at all.

At bustling Camden village, the center of trade, there were intellectual stirrings. A small group at the Harbor formed a literary society and one of the first propositions

debated was the question: "Is it probable that the American Republic will still be in existence at the end of the nineteenth century."

A Mr. Codman assumed the affirmative. A Mr. Storer and a Mr. Talbot took the dim view on the issue.





## THE WILLIAM CARLETON HOUSE

*This fine old hip-roof house on Camden Street was built just after the turn of the eighteenth century by Coburn Tyler. It figured in an incident just before the war of 1812 when a suit of sails stripped from a vessel that had violated the Embargo Act was secreted in its cellar by Simeon Tyler, Coburn's son. The house, never completed by Tyler, came into the hands of William Carleton in 1815 when Simeon sold the farm he was unable to maintain to this prospering Camden merchant for \$2700. It remained in the Carleton Family until recent years when Willis Carleton, just before his death, sold his ancestral home to Eric Sexton.*





## Seven

IN 1838, William Carleton removed his business from the "Harbor" to the "River." He had long been a leading merchant at Camden Village as well as President of the first bank (established in 1836 on the second floor of what is now the Spear plumbing shop on Bay View Street.) Perhaps Camden village was becoming too crowded for his tastes or more likely he saw greater opportunity in this virgin territory. Whatever his motives, his move had a far reaching influence on Rockport's future. His coming marked the beginning of a new era for Goose River.

The only business building of any consequence at this time was the Granite Block built three years before, in 1835, from stone cut out of the side of the hill halfway up Franklin Street. Originally there were three entrances to the Granite Block, all facing west to the river. It was the center store that housed Goose River's first Post Office, established in 1840 with Mr. Silas Piper officiating. This cubicle was so dark that it was known, in those years, as the "hole in the wall."

Another business building constructed around this time (1836) was the boot shop and home of Ezra Merriam. It stood (and still stands) abutting the Granite Block. Jotham Shepherd was another up and coming young merchant. He had settled a few years before at Ingraham's Corner and had married Job Ingraham's deaf-mute daughter, Margaret. With his father-in-law, Jotham had built a store (on the site of the present parking area) and established a general store that was destined to become one of the most thriving in the whole region.

In 1839, Job Ingraham moved from the Corners to the village. He lived in a small house lugged over from Oyster River Pond with 35 yoke of oxen while his new home on Mechanic Street (the James Miller house) was completed.

In 1840, a Mr. Sherman erected a store on the river bank across from the Granite Block. Two years later it was purchased by William Fenderson who, with his new bride Abigail McLaughlin, continued in trade there.

Another man with a future was David Talbot. David Talbot and his progeny were soon to exert considerable influence in the business growth of Goose River.

And there was Jacob Graffam, whose snug white house, probably built in the early 1800's, still stands on the hillside across from the Town Hall. Jacob had married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Chase of Camden village (Jacob's brother Joseph later married another Chase daughter, Lucy).

There was Oliver Morrill, a French shipwright, who, bringing a new bride to the village, had built himself a fine home (1840) on the east shore of the harbor.

The whole village had been expanding in those years between 1825 and 1840. All the Barrett boys, with the exception of Daniel's son, William, who moved out to Lake Megunticook, had built homes of their own and settled down.

The best preserved of the Barrett homes is the stone house Charles Barrett built on Mechanic Street in 1837 and is now owned by Mrs. Morris Wolf.

One of the oldest homes in Goose River now stands just up Franklin Street hill. It was the old Barrows place and was moved to its present location from the site of the firehouse when this building was constructed.

But we've arrived at the year 1840 and this was a memorable year. It was in this year that Captain Jabez Amsbury came to Goose River. He had come to retire from the sea to the hill that bears his name. His sons and grandsons, sailing men all, were to keep that illustrious name bright in the homeric age of sail upon which the curtain was about to rise.

Maine was at the threshold of its greatest glory. Rockport was destined to have its share of the glory. Albert, son of John Eels, built Rockport's first vessel up-creek in 1835. She was the 104 ton schooner, *Lucy Blake*. Patrick Simonton (his home, built in 1835, stands on the corner of Mechanic and Russell Avenue) began laying down keels at the foot of the cove below his home in 1840. His ship, *Tennessee*, was the first full rigged ship built at Goose River.

Hobbs and Pitts had begun cutting ice on the Lily Pond for export, a company that became Carleton & Gould and later, Carleton, Rust & Company. This new industry was to be one of the mainstays of Rockport's dawning prosperity.

And this ancient business of lime burning was beginning to shape up into a major industry. For years, every other land-owner in the region had been burning lime on the side. There were kilns indicated on the earliest maps of Cambden Plantation. It was probably Captain Hiram Hartford — he came to Goose River in the 1820's — who first went into the lime business on a large scale. He built the first kiln on the harbor shore. Soon there were kilns sprouting all around the



eastern side of the cove. Just south of the bridge are remains of Comfort Barrow's kiln. Moving eastward around the foot of the harbor were the kilns of William Carleton, David Talbot, Thomas Spear, Amos Dailey. Lastly (some residual evidence remains) were the kilns of the Barrett boys, John, Samuel and Charles.

Although water power was never known to be utilized to the extent it was developed at "Harbor" village, there was considerable industrial activity along Goose River at the time. There was one grist mill and two stave mills as well as a brick and pottery yard. At West Camden (West Rockport), Edwards & Leach had a furniture factory on Oyster River. Nearby, was Randall Tolman's stave and shingle mill and on the same river was situated, Otis Wade's tannery.

All in all, Goose River was beginning to look up when William Carleton came to town. He didn't have long to live in his new home, however. He died in 1840 leaving his son to take over his enterprises. With Joshua Norwood, Samuel Dexter Carleton continued carrying on at his father's store. But Samuel Dexter had some big ideas churning around in his head. Ships were the thing! There was money and a future in wooden ships. Trade was booming and there weren't enough Maine bottoms to carry the trade. And what was even more important there was a man on hand who knew how to build ships.

The 94 ton *Del Norte* was to be the first of sixty-two vessels built by the master builder, John Pascals, under the Carleton, Norwood banner; an illustrious brood that included the famous *Frederick Billings*.

In 1846, Philander Carleton joined the firm and it became Carleton, Norwood & Company. Still over the door of the brick block they built in 1857, hangs the sign as a kind of

memorial to this heyday of Rockport's history and to these men who helped to shape it.

And here it becomes Rockport history for, in the spring of 1852, Goose River disappeared. The citizens, at the great mass meeting, gathered to settle on a name that would carry more dignity, for even then the goose was a much maligned bird. Despite the vociferous objections from Rockland, who considered it a bald-faced infringement, Goose River became Rockport.

Once again, rumblings of war were heard over the Camden Hills. One bright fall day towards the end of the decade, a steamboat, bearing the Little Giant, Stephen Douglas, touched off at Camden Harbor. The crowd came down to the steamship pier to have a look at this mighty little man. The Little Giant doffed his hat. The crowd gave him a cheer. A few weeks later, Camden went to the polls and voted overwhelmingly for the western rail-splitter, Abe Lincoln.







## THE JACOB GRAFFAM HOUSE

*Altho the exact age is undetermined, this old house in Rockport Village is considered by some authorities as one of the oldest in the region. The first Jacob Graffam was born on Matinic and in the year 1766, old records show, he owned land in Friendship jointly with his son, Jacob, Jr. It was probably this son, Captain Jacob, who came to Rockport around 1800 with his wife, born Martha Andrews, and sons, Jacob and Joseph, and built the house in question. It was Jacob III who inherited the house upon his father's death and who married Robert Chase's daughter, Elizabeth. For some years in the past century this was the livery stable of William Corthell. The house is now owned by Jesse Wentworth.*



## *Eight*

CAMDEN'S immortal hero of this War of the Rebellion was one, William Conway, son of Richard. Conway was an old Camden salt who had spent forty-five of his sixty years in the American Navy. Stationed at Pensacola Navy Yard just after the outbreak of hostilities, he was ordered by his superiors to strike the flag and surrender when a rebel force appeared.

"I won't do it, sir," the old sailor replied. "That's the flag of my country."

(Forty-five years later, Camden belatedly commemorated this native sailor's patriotism. August 30, 1906 was Conway Memorial Day. Over ten thousand turned out. Seven battle-ships of the American Navy dropped anchor off the Ledges. A parade headed by Chief Marshal Aldus and aides, J. A. Brewster and Frank Pullen, marched through the bedecked town and a tablet mounted on a 30 ton boulder, previously hauled from Ogier Hill to the school grounds by six horses, was unveiled and dedicated).

Although the battlegrounds of the Civil War were far to the south, this bitter struggle for preservation of the Union



was real and close to the Township of Camden. The town offered hundreds of her young men and there were some sixty who didn't come home. Among the honored dead were three Thorndikes, a Lewis Upham, a Manassa Spear, a Frederick Veazie, a Franklin Achorn, a Horatio Collamore, an Isaac Keller, a William Simonton, two Tolmans, Isaah and Albert, and Oliver Metcalf, descendant of the fabulous Leonard Metcalf who had carried on his private war with the British during the American Revolution.

At the battle of Gettysburg; men from Maine were in the thick of it. At Chambersburg Pike, on little Round Top, at Cemetery Hill, Camden men helped turn the tide. On the final day when Pickett made his futile charge across a mile and a half of open meadow, the Nineteenth Maine was directly in his path. The thin blue line held, the battle of decision was won. Among the men who fell that day were Joseph Wilson and John Carey of Camden.

At home these were grim years of working and waiting. The township harbored a few Copperheads who, openly or secretly, sympathized with the Southern cause. And there were more than a few, as there are in all wars, who grew fat on the profits of war. Running the blockade of the Southern Coast, established many Maine fortunes and Camden was not guiltless of profiting by trading with the enemy.

And, in common with a good part of the country, there was in Camden an honest and bitter opposition to the Draft Law. This sentiment was, in fact, so strong that the Federal Government thought it expedient to send a U. S. Cutter into Goose River Harbor, her guns stripped and readied for the first sign of insurrection. No overt act occurred but the few who had sparked the resistance hastily departed for Canada.

It was during the war years that a tragedy gave Maiden's Cliff its name. A Maying party was picnicking near the brink of the cliff one spring day. Zadock French, a young girl from Lincolnville, wandered too close to the edge and a sudden gust of wind took her parasol and carried her over the cliff to her death. Until quite recently, a cross marked the spot of this tragedy.

The bloody war of attrition was coming to a close when Captain James Magune, a Rockporter (his first home stood in the Pascal Shipyard) entered Mobile Bay in command of one of the vessels in Farragut's fleet and took part in the bombardment of the city.

At Appomattox Court House, April, 1865, General Lee offered his sword to Grant as a symbol of surrender. The war was over. Soon Camden men began trickling home to their families, once again to resume their broken lives.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the proud boast of Camden Village in these war years that she not only built the finest vessels on the Coast but she outfitted them as well, from canvas down to seabread. This was no idle boast. Strung along Megunticook River from the lake to salt water were a phalanx of small industries producing a diversity of marine goods.

In the years just before the Civil War, Gould's Plug Mill was turning out 15,000 bungs a day. Horatio Alden & Company was producing deadeyes. David Knowlton's Machine Shop, world famous, was engaged in the manufacture of ship machinery. Bisbee & Marble Powder Works were producing, in addition to explosions that rocked the town regularly, 5,000 kegs of powder annually. There was an Oakum Factory.

There was the Bradbury Bakery making ship bread as well as covering a good portion of the state with a bread route.

Among other industries, not directly dependent on ship-building were Cyrus Alden's woolen mill; the tannery Moses Parker had established and was at that time carried on by Samuel Emerson; a sash and blind mill, using the Richard's river rights; a wheelwright shop and an iron foundry.

Camden was a salty village in that decade before the Civil War. There were few indeed who didn't have concern, directly or indirectly, with ships or shipping. Those who weren't fashioning ships were sailing them. More than a hundred vessels carried *Camden* on the stern as a port of hail.

It was a Camden vessel that carried Captain Rufus Benton and mate Joseph Graffam into a little international trouble in the Gulf. The *Georgiana* out of Camden discharged her cargo of lime at New Orleans and was promptly chartered for South America. The contracting parties were taciturn about the motley crew and came aboard in the dead of night. They referred to the villainous appearing crew as "miners" and let it go at that. Once out to sea, the "miners" turned out to be filibusters shanghaied for an insurrection in Cuba. The leaders took over Captain Benton's vessel. The following day, the *Georgiana* made a rendezvous with a mysterious steamer loaded with arms and she was relieved of her miscellaneous live cargo. However, trouble for Captain Benton and Mate Graffam had just begun. Their ship was overhauled by a Spanish Man of War. The Camden seamen were taken to Havana and clapped into prison. And there they might have rotted had it not been for the intercession of Sarah Graffam of Camden, mother of Joseph.

Sarah took herself to Washington and went directly to the Secretary of State and from him to the President. The Camden men were released, but it wasn't, Sarah made clear



in her letter of thanks printed in the Camden Advertiser, any credit to the Secretary. "As for Mr. Daniel Webster . . . . . I can say nothing, either of his kindness or sympathy for me. Suffice it to say, if he remains in office, may God give him a new heart . . . . ." To Millard Fillmore, President of the United States, however, she tendered her respects for his kindness and benevolence.

Before the Civil War, most of the ship ways lay about the inner harbor. It was the firm of Hodgman & Glover that first built ships at Eaton's Point or what later was known as the Bean Yard. But it wasn't until Holly Bean took over the yard in 1875 that Camden achieved its greatest prominence as a shipbuilding town. He was to build, before his day was passed, some of the finest vessels on the coast, a brave list, over seventy in all, that included seventeen three masters, twenty four masters, twelve five masters, as well as the first six master ever launched, the *George W. Wells* . . . . .

It was in 1885 that Rockport had its most memorable launch. That was the year the *Frederick Billings* hit the water before a cheering crowd from all over the State of Maine. She was a ship of 2,628 ton burthen — the largest square rigger ever built on the shores of the Penobscot and the second four master launched in America. She had fiddled royal masts and carried three skysail yards, her main truck hung 180 feet above her decks.

The *Billings* was lost in 1893 off Chile. She was fired by her crew, the story goes. She sank in twenty minutes.

The last vessel to be built in Rockport was in 1904. She was Frank Carleton's 1,485 ton schooner *Addison E. Bullard*. But before the stirring era closed and the sound of the hammer and caulking iron was silent in her coves, the Township of Camden (Camden, Rockport, Glen Cove) was to send down to the sea and into world trade more vessels than any other town (Rockland excepted) on the Penobscot.

Before passing on we will reprint from "Sailing Days on the Penobscot," Lincoln Colcord's compilation of vessels built at Rockport and Camden in the year 1856, one of this townships greatest shipbuilding years. The figures indicate tonnage, length, breadth, depth in that order.

1856

Ship *Thirty-One States*, 1,000 x 168 x 34 x 17. Carleton, Norwood & Co., et al, Rockport. Lost on the coast of Spain with most of her crew.

Bark *R. A. Allen*, 566 x 135 x 30 x 12. Carleton, Norwood & Co., Rockport, et al. Alive in 1885.

Bark *Adeline C. Adams*, 399 x 124 x 30 x 12. Camden. Alive in 1885.

Brig *Katahdin*, 349 x 120 x 27 x 12. Carleton, Norwood & Co., et al, Rockport. Thomas Amesbury, m. Renamed *Colleen Bawn*.

Brig *Lizabel*, 298 x 112 x 28 x 11. Thomas Buckmaster, Camden, et al.

Brig *J. McIntyre*, 289 x 116 x 28 x 11. Carleton, Norwood & Co., et al, Rockport.

Brig *O. C. Clary*, 248 x 109 x 26 x 9. Judson Philbrook, Camden, et al.

Schooner *Snow Squall*, 187 x 94 x 25 x 9. S. E. Shepherd, et al, Camden.

Schooner *Lucy A. Orcutt*, 198 x 96 x 26 x 9. William Amesbury, et al, Rockport.

Schooner *Ellen H. Gott*, 95 tons. Sunk by ice in Potomac River in 1877.

Schooner *Cherokee*, 85 tons. Condemned and broken up in 1879.

Schooner *C. H. Taggard*, 41 x 45 x 15 x 7. Ruel Philbrook, Camden.

"Lost on the coast of Spain," says this brief commentary

about the ship *Thirty-one States*. Here is the story we find in the old journal of James Stinson of Rockport, now in the possession of Mrs. James Miller. “. . . . It was related to me (writes this now departed Rockporter) by two of the sailors Mr. Fred A. Norwood and Mr. Barzilla H. Spear. In the year 1861 when the North and the South went to war, she was chartered to go south for a cargo of cotton but a blockade being put on, it was changed and she was chartered to go to St. John, N. B. and load general cargo for Genoa, Italy. They stopped in Liverpool a few weeks and then continued on their voyage. Captain George Carleton went in command. A Mr. Fales was first mate, Edwin Grant, second mate, Fred A. Norwood, third mate, John Carver, steward. The cook was a foreigner. They had in all 18 men. They went along slowly on account of much fog and bad weather.

“One night, the Captain came on deck (it was midnight) and said to the watch, ‘Is that the loom of land’ and soon after called all hands aft. He told them that they were near a bold shore and that there was not room to ware round (It was the rule that on a long voyage the chain was unshackled from the anchor and put below, so they could not anchor.) The Captain proposed to take a boat and all had their choice; some proposed to remain aboard. It was nearly calm except a very high sea and so dark one could not tell one from the other when moving about.

“A boat was lowered but it was stove and another was put over all right. The Captain went down into it first. He fell or jumped and as no sound came from him, the boat was dropped astern but in a few minutes he called for them to haul the boat up alongside and ordered two buckets to be sent down (He had broken several ribs in the fall). As they entered the boat, two Grant brothers stood by the rail, asking each other to get into the boat but one would not leave the other.



It may be they thought, if they both got in, the boat might be overloaded, so they remained aboard. Mr. Spear was last to go down into the boat with a bucket on each arm, a heavy sea rolled over him, filling both buckets, but he hung on to the rope after losing a bucket and was taken into the boat. No doubt when ordered, one of the Grant boys cast the painter off. The ship soon shot away, the sails hanging every way and her lights were only seen for a few minutes. All night they kept the boat head to the sea and when morning came it was found there were nine men in the boat and nine had remained aboard the boat and how singular, the officers were divided for those lost in the ship were nine, including the first mate, Mr. Fales who was engaged to Miss Helen Pitts of Rockport (sister to Al Pitts), the cook; Edwin Grant, second mate, George Grant, his brother (they lived on Mechanic Street); Hiram McAllister (brother to Charles McAllister). The cook dressed in his best and said: "Where I go, I may as well wear my best."

"Those in the boat saved were nine, Captain George Carleton; third mate, Fred A. Norwood; steward, John Carver; Barzilla H. Spear; Andrew J. Morton; John Packard; all of Rockport, also a Mr. Skinner of Bangor. (This is all the names I have been able to find).

"They rowed to an Island where they met the American Consul. The next day some of them rowed over to where they thought the ship might be and the only thing to be seen, high upon the rocks was the hail Camden, Me. No one of their brother shipmates were there to greet them while a part of the stern on the rocks told the story of the end of the fine ship *Thirty-one States*.

"The place where the ship was lost was on the Northwest coast of Spain, in the bay of Biscay."









## THE HATHAWAY-CUSHING HOUSE

*John Hathaway, Camden's first lawyer came to town in 1796. Marrying Deborah Cushing, he built a law office on what is now the Town Common, on the corner of Chestnut and Elm Streets. With a bright future assured, this talented young man began constructing this gracious home on Chestnut Street in 1799. He was stricken that same year with typhus and died at the age of 26 leaving a wife and infant son. Tragedy descended again upon this house twenty-three years later, when this only son of Deborah and John was lost at sea. Deborah Cushing Hathaway continued to live alone in this house until her death at the age of ninety-one. This old Camden home was once owned by Edna St. Vincent Millay. It is now the property of Edwin Sears of Boston. John Hathaway's law office was moved in recent years to Hosmer's Pond where it is the property of Charles Dwinal.*



## Nine

IF, in those crowded decades after the Civil War, ships were king, it was limerock that was heir apparent. The limerock upon which the whole region rests originated some millions of years ago when calcareous skeletons of minute organisms were precipitated into a submarine ooze in quiet off-shore waters.

The basic element in limerock is calcite and even our very earliest settlers knew that roasting of calcite would drive off carbon dioxide and leave quick lime. From Camden's very beginning there were quarries and kilns dotted over the countryside, the most famous of which was the Jacobs' lime quarry near what is now the Camden-Rockport line and which was once a part of the Jacobs' farm.

In the early days a good portion of both villages had a finger in lime. The coming of the new patent kilns in the late fifties brought a change. Lime became big business. The new kilns, first introduced by Carleton, Norwood & Company, David Talbot and Jotham Shepherd, took less time, burned less fuel and had the added advantage of not requiring its fires



drawn after each operation. The small producer couldn't compete with these modern contraptions and soon the old fashioned kiln and the small backyard independent operator became obsolete.

Thus another big business, another boom came to the Township. Before the end of the century, Rockport was to become the center of one of the greatest lime producing regions in America.

For almost half a century after the coming of the patent kiln, Rockport was one of the most thriving communities on the Penobscot. Lime burned night and day and a steady cavalcade of teams over Limerock Street fed the hungry kiln maws throughout the daylight hours, laying a pall of dust and smoke over the village.

Lime sheds and sprawling cooperage sheds ranged along the shore. Back country, every other farm house had a small sparetime cooperage to keep abreast the almost insatiable demand for more and still more casks. The kilns consumed an average of thirty cords of wood a day bringing into the cove, until the freeze, an unending procession of wood coasters. These "Kiln-wooders" were a bobtail ragtag breed of vessel, the only qualification being they would float. Many of them were loaded so high that a watch on top of the deck load was required to direct the helmsman.

The lime coasters or "Limers," however, had to be considerably more seaworthy. The job of carrying lime was a particularly hazardous assignment. This wasn't any job for a leaky vessel for quick lime and water didn't mix. Water was lime's deadliest enemy. If a fire broke out below decks the last thing you could fight this fire with was water. There wasn't much you could do but seal the vessel tight, plaster every crack and seam and pray that the blaze would smother.

There were many times during this bustling period when the terrifying news of a limer on fire in the harbor brought the town to the water's edge. The stricken vessel became a pariah. She was moored offshore, her crew dismissed and the waiting would begin. The crisis was sometimes a matter of days; sometimes it was a fearful vigil that ran into weeks. There was no way of inspecting the fire for admission of air was fatal. Frequently, if after a long vigil, it still appeared that a fire seethed below decks, the doomed vessel was towed into a secluded cove and holes bored into her bottom to allow sea water to get at the firey cancer. This was the heroic, last ditch treatment. There was an outside chance that something could be saved of the vessel. Sometimes a vessel survived. More often she burst into flame and burned down to her keel. Rockport Harbor can still show a few charred skeletal remains of limers that met their ends by this ordeal of fire and water.

The most famous kiln towards the end of this era was "Gran" Carleton's big kiln on the west shore of the cove. Using soft coal he invented a new method and this roaring monster established some kind of a new world record in burning more than 2800 casks in seven days.

It was in the eighties that a number of the most prominent kiln owners, notably Herbert Shepherd, organized the Lime-rock railroad, a narrow gauge line to carry limerock from Simonton's Corner to the Harbor kilns. The road carried lime for eight years when, in 1894, it was abandoned.

In 1900, the Rockport-Rockland Lime Company was formed and with a capital of \$2,000,000 it consolidated and took over all the lime properties in Rockport. Methods were even further modernized, economies were instigated in an attempt to compete more favorably with other lime producing sections of the country. But cheap wood was gone. Rockport was too far off a railhead to buy coal at an advantage. The

great days were over. Gradually the Rockport quarries were abandoned. The fires in the kilns went out. Rockport's booming lime industry went the way of her wooden ships. Dark days were ahead for Rockport and it was to be generations before the village began her slow recovery.









## WATERFRONT, ROCKPORT

*This recent woodcut by the local artist, Carroll Berry, shows a section of Rockport's inner harbor. In the foreground is the Maine Coast Sea Food lobster smack, Mishawauka, moored before the plant. The plant has been considerably expanded since this woodcut was made and now has a tank capacity of two hundred thousand pounds, making it the largest distributing plant in Maine. In the background stand Rockport's brick blocks, the first to the left being the old Carleton-Norwood & Company building. On the second floor of this brick building is the Old Union Hall, the scene of the heated Town Meeting in 1891, that resulted in the separation of Camden and Rockport.*





## Ten

IT had been coming for a long time. For a hundred years, despite stresses and strains within the body politic, the Township of Camden had held together. Practically, there was something to be said for division by the middle of the nineteenth century. The villages within the township were each, to a large extent, maintaining an independent and self-sufficient life of their own, both economically and socially. Citizens of Rockport and Camden seldom mixed, except at town meetings. There was no particular reason for journeying to a neighboring village. For one thing it wasn't the few minutes trip it is today. As late as 1895 the stage coach, one day in the mud season, consumed seven hours between Rockland and Rockport. As the twentieth century approached all that was holding the two villages of Rockport and Camden together was a common bond of history and a few miserable roads. Yes, there was something to be said for division but the manner and atmosphere in which it was effected was unfortunate.

It had been discussed at town meetings for many years before the final break. In fact this delicate question of division made lively town meetings for almost twenty years. It was in the great bridge fight in 1884 that a healthy rivalry began to turn to bitterness. Rockport wanted an iron bridge over Goose River and Camden Village just didn't want to help pay for it. It was as clean and simple as that. Rockport got her iron bridge; (the same bridge that was sent toppling into Goose River in the fall of 1946 when a trailer truck struck one of its abutments) but the vote was close. The bad feeling stirred up in that fight never really healed. From then on it was just a matter of time.

For the next six years the question of separation took on the emotional color of a "cause." The Spring town meetings were a series of violent verbal battles. The lines were drawn quite sharply, village for village. Camden wanted to be set off. Rockport wanted to continue as one township. During those heated days it was a fool-hardy man, indeed, who ventured alone into enemy territory. A Rockporter or a Camdenite who thought contrary to the sentiment of his own village, and there were a few, was considered the vilest of traitors and spurned like a pariah by his fellows.

Even so the whole bitter affair might have died out from sheer exhaustion had it not been for a small, influential group of Camden citizens who persisted in a fight for dissolution. In the last several meetings before 1891, the climax was reached. It was reminiscent of a saloon brawl in the days of the old frontier. They say that P. J. Carleton, no youngster at the time, figured personally in half a dozen of the free-for-alls that broke out in the hall that day.

That day it was done. A petition was sent to Augusta from the Camden contingent. The fight was carried to the State House. One august Senator was moved to remark that



the two villages should have been celebrating its centennial rather than suing for a divorce. And so it was on February 25, 1891, a hundred years almost to the day after the formation of the Township, that Rockport and Camden called it quits and each went its separate way.

The division was made legal by a scrawl of the Governor's pen but it was to be another half century before the wounds of that bitter battle were healed. For many years, the relations between the two towns were strained and barely civil. The small fry reflected and carried on the feud of their fathers. The youngsters of the estranged sister towns were wont to meet and stand embattled at the quarries or at Porgy Notch, that once heavily wooded stretch along Union Street between Rockport and Camden, hurling names and rocks.

The Camden urchins would shout: "Rockport paddy-whackers live on sody crackers!" The young Rockporters had the answer for that one: "Camden bum lives on rum!"

Today, although rivalry does exist, there is little trace of this ancient bitterness remaining. The two towns have come a long way on the road back to mutual respect and cooperation.

Hard upon the heels of this great political fight, came Camden's greatest catastrophe. Men are prone to make milestones of tragedy. The tenth of November, 1892 was a date long remembered. This was the day of Camden's great fire.

It began in the early hours of the morning in a wooden building on the east side of Main Street. Driven by a stiff easterly, the fanned flames swept down to the shore and leaped the street. According to witnesses, burning embers were carried as far as Simonton's Corner that frightful night. In a matter of hours, virtually the whole business section of the town lay in smoking ruins.

After a cheerless winter, Camden began to re-build but it was many years before the scars of this holocaust were erased. As a result of this costly fire, Camden adopted an ordinance requiring new construction in the business district to be of fireproof materials. Modern fire-fighting equipment was purchased, laying the ground work for what is today, under Chief Allen Payson, one of the most efficient Fire Departments in the State.

Rockport's great fire came fifteen years later in the summer of 1907. It started early Sunday evening in the Eel's lime kiln on the west side of the harbor. Fires in the kilns were common occurrences and this was just another fire until the wind suddenly shifted to the westward and began carrying burning embers across the cove. The ice houses, then ranging along the entire east side of the cove, caught and began going up like torches. The fire departments of all the surrounding towns were summoned to the scene. The fire fighters fought a stubborn fight all that night. Although most all the houses on Mechanic Street were afire at one time or another before the fire was brought under control, they were saved with negligible damage. But the ice houses burned to the ground, leaving ice standing in the sun; the kilns on the west shore of the harbor, with one exception, were destroyed.

In the thick of the fight that night was Rockport's famous hand pumper, the G. F. Burgess, winner of many a muster in her colorful career. She now stands in honored retirement in a dark corner of Rockport's fire house, an affectionate reminder of by-gone days. Also in the fight that night was Charles "Ed" Rhodes, who retired as chief engineer of the Rockport Department in 1946, after thirty-five years of service.

The great fire marked the beginning of the end to another of Rockport's dwindling industries. Two of the ice houses were replaced and the Rockport Ice Company continued

to cut ice and ship it for a number of years; but the ice business was on the way out when the fire dealt this staggering blow. The high days when 50,000 tons of ice were cut each year from the Lily Pond, half of which went direct from the Pond into the holds of ships at harvesting time, were already passed. Also gone were the "good old days" when a few Rockport fortunes were made by the simple process of cutting ice at the Pond for 25 cents a ton and selling it at the wharf one half mile away at \$4.00 a ton. During the years around the turn of the century, Rockport was the largest ice producing town in the state and the trade mark, Lily Pond Ice, was famous throughout the east.

It is only today, with the opening of the Penobscot Bay Ice Company plant, geared to produce 30 tons of artificial ice a day to augment its natural supply, that Rockport once again is achieving its old position as one of the most important ice producing centers in Maine.

\* \* \* \* \*

The events of the last few decades are too close to be properly viewed as history. Within this span were two World Wars and a valley between them of an uneasy peace. When the war came in 1917, Camden went back to building ships. Robert L. Bean, son of Holly, began laying keels for wooden ships at the old Bean Yard. At its peak, some 200 men were back at their old trades, fashioning vessels to meet the war-stimulated need for more bottoms.

Five four masters were built in Camden in the next several years: the *Annie L. Barnes*, *Edna McKnight*, *Charles A. Dean*, *Robert L. Bean* and the *T. M. Barnsdall*. Then, once again, this famous old yard was silent. It took another twenty-five years later to revive Camden once more as a shipbuilding town.



When the second World War came to America, the Bean Yard was the Camden Shipbuilding & Marine Railway Co. and in the hands of three newcomers, Richard Lyman, Clinton Lunt and Cary Bok, son of one of the region's great benefactors, Mary Louise Bok (later Mrs. Efrem Zimbalist). This time when the call came for ships it was all but too late. The men who knew the art of building wooden ships were, for the most part, gone or too old to ply their trades proficiently. But the call went out and the region responded. There were, fortunately, a few who hadn't forgotten and more than enough eager to learn. And learning came astonishingly easy for it was there in the blood. Young men came out of the stores, off the farms and from the region's garages — fifteen hundred of them at the peak of construction. They built and launched in those three years: 2 Minesweepers, 3 Barges, 11 APC Troop Ships, 12 Salvage Tugs — a total of 23,000 tons of war shipping. During those busy years, Camden took on the color and aspect of a boom town. At the war's close, many who had come from distant places to work in the war effort, remained to live.

Between the two wars there were other changes in the region. Camden, partly through the efforts and generosity of Mrs. Bok, built its library and its Garden Theater. Rockport, during the dark days of the depression, underwent a face lifting with the help of this same benefactor. The decaying remains of another era — old stores and sagging icehouses, vacant, windowless homes, long untenanted — were torn down and cleared away. It was during these days that Rockport became, for a period, the Summer Music Capitol of America. And Camden, too, in this era had a call to fame as the first town in America to have hanging flower baskets on its lamp-posts.

And between those wars, the region of the Camden Hills began to assume its proper place as one of Maine's "lost" paradises. It had never been lost, of course, but it was constantly being discovered. New fast roads were making Maine accessible and the summer vacation was becoming an American habit. What had been a trickle of summer visitors who kept their secret guarded now became a tide-rip of summer vacationists who went around telling everyone of Camden's beauties. In 1935 Captain Frank Swift further gave the town a salty fame when he reconditioned one windjammer, offering to the countless who had never been to sea, an opportunity to sail the ocean blue in true fo'c's'le style. His venture met with such astonishing success that today he has a fleet of eight and Camden's Windjammer Cruises have become nationally famous.

Of course, the Camden Hills had been discovered many times since Captain George Waymouth sighted the "great mountains" from the quarter deck of his ship *Archangel*. This summer business had had its small beginnings way back before the Civil War when a few experimental householders took in a few boarders who wished to escape the summer heat of Bangor. Later, several hotels sprang up to accommodate the visitors in a more professional manner. It wasn't until the 1880's that the region enjoyed its first little boom as a watering spot. In the course of the next two decades, scores of new summer homes began sprouting on the shores and in the foothills.

The impact of this business, gradual as it was, brought changes that were profound and far-reaching. Many of the region's once prosperous industries were prostrate. This new infusion was a godsend. Yet, desperately as this new money was needed, it appeared at first as a mixed blessing.

As this summer business became more and more of a major "industry," an awareness dawned that the region was developing a lop-sided economy; a cycle of summer prosperity, a hard winter and a long uphill haul through the spring. Once this fact was grasped, the region was faced with a two-horned dilemma. The people of the region, aware of their past, were convinced that their future salvation lay, not in living on it, but rather freeing themselves of dependence and once more getting back into the stream of progress. The summer population, on the other hand, preferred that the villages remain old and unchanged.

Today this honest conflict is being resolved. The new generation of summer colonists, many of them sons and daughters of the early summer families, more and more tend to become a part of the villages. Less and less is there a sense of a new way of life super-imposed upon the old. The two are mixing and working together toward a common end, a healthy balanced economy based on small, diversified industry.

Camden, from its raw beginnings, grew and prospered by infusions of new, young blood. The summer "visitor" is giving way to the summer resident, who, holding a profound respect for Maine and its people and aware of its past, is committed to its future.

That morning in 1791 at Peter Ott's Tavern, the newly elected First Selectman was doubtlessly called upon to say a few words. John Harkness was certainly a man of few words, a thoughtful, self-educated man with a solid sense of values. "Boys," he might have said, looking about him at the hills and at the sea to the eastward, "none of us will ever get over rich here, but it looks like a nice place to live."

Over a century later, Edna St. Vincent Millay, who spent all her growing years in Camden, uttered her feelings in an-



other way. RENASCENCE, one of the finest poems in our language begins:

All I could see from where I stood  
Was three long mountains and a wood;  
I turned and looked the other way,  
And saw three islands in a bay,  
So with my eyes I traced a line  
Of the horizon, thin and fine  
Straight around till I was come  
Back to where I'd started from;  
And all I saw from where I stood  
Was three long mountains and a wood.  
Over these things I could not see:  
These were the things that bounded me;

She, too, had the Maine idea.















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